COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Forty-fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 18 February 1988, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SENE (Senegal)

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Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

Statement by Mr. Klibi, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States

Question of the realization in all countries of the economic, social and cultural rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and study of special problems which the developing countries face in their efforts to achieve these human rights, including:

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Any corrections to the records of the meetings of the Commission at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.
CONTENTS (continued)

(a) Problems related to the right to enjoy an adequate standard of living; the right to development;

(b) The effects of the existing unjust international economic order on the economies of the developing countries, and the obstacle that this represents for the implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(c) Popular participation in its various forms as an important factor in development and in the full realization of all human rights (continued)

Status of the International Covenants on Human Rights (continued)
The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.


1. Mr. MARTENSON (Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights) said that the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief had a prominent place in the United Nations Charter itself and was also to be found in the main human-rights instruments drawn up by the United Nations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

2. The General Assembly had reaffirmed on numerous occasions that that freedom was a right guaranteed to all without discrimination and had expressed its deep concern at the persistence, in many parts of the world, of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief.

3. In its resolution 1987/15, the Commission requested the Sub-Commission to examine as a matter of priority the report of its Special Rapporteur, Mrs. Odio Benito, and to transmit it to the Commission together with any observations, in particular in regard to the recommendations concerning the elaboration of a convention. The Commission also requested the Secretary-General to prepare an addendum to the compendium of the national legislation and regulations of States on the question of freedom of religion or belief and to submit a report, on the basis of information provided by Member States, on the modalities by which the preparation of a binding international instrument could be pursued, including the possible establishment of a working group. The Secretary-General's two reports had been distributed under the symbols E/CN.4/1988/43 and 44. The Commission had also decided to extend for one year the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Angelo Vidal Almeida Ribeiro, appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world which were inconsistent with the provisions of the Declaration. The Special Rapporteur's report had been distributed under the symbol E/CN.4/1988/45.

4. At its thirty-ninth session, the Sub-Commission had expressed its appreciation to Mrs. Odio Benito for her valuable study and welcomed the many recommendations contained therein. The Sub-Commission had requested its Chairman to entrust to one of its members the following tasks: to consider which aspects of the issue should be studied in greater depth by the Sub-Commission; to examine information, recommendations and other materials which might be submitted by Governments, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and religious bodies; to examine the issues and factors which should be considered before any definitive drafting of a binding international instrument took place; and to report to the Sub-Commission at its forty-first session. The work thus defined had been entrusted to Mr. van Boven. The Sub-Commission had also recommended to the Commission that the study prepared by Mrs. Odio Benito should be published in all official languages of the United Nations and widely disseminated (resolution 1987/33 of the Sub-Commission).
5. Finally, he drew the Commission's attention to resolution 42/97 in which the General Assembly requested the Commission to examine Mrs. Odio Benito's study, in the light of any observations received from the Sub-Commission to continue to study ways and means of implementing the Declaration and, lastly, to report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

6. **Mr. VIDAL ALMEIDA RIBEIRO** (Special Rapporteur), introducing his report on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (E/CN.4/1988/45), recalled that, in his first report (E/CN.4/1987/35), he had given priority to a general analysis of the obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration so as to set out clearly the elements of the problem and emphasize its magnitude, the ways in which it manifested itself, and the seriousness of its implications for the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms. In the current report, he had tried to identify more precisely some specific situations in which there might have been inconsistencies with the provisions of the Declaration, for the purpose not of making accusations but rather of promoting a better understanding of the actual situation with regard to intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief and helping to make international public opinion more aware of the problem.

7. He had chosen seven Governments in all on which he had decided to concentrate for a number of reasons. The allegations concerning those Governments constituted a more or less complete sample of the various types of incidents and measures incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration. They thus served as examples and clearly illustrated the practical situation in respect of religious freedom. Moreover, the very broad geographical distribution of the allegations in question highlighted the virtually universal nature of the phenomenon of religious or ideological intolerance and discrimination. Lastly, the examples selected shed some light on the many social and cultural aspects dimensions of the phenomenon.

8. As in the case of the previous report, he had made use of specific information obtained from various sources, both governmental and non-governmental. In connection with the replies from Governments, he mentioned that, after completion of the report, he had received further information from the Governments of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. He thanked those Governments in particular which had replied to his communications informing them of allegations made against them and welcomed their constructive approach which rendered possible a dialogue on the international scale. On 8 February 1988, he had also received a reply from the Government of Pakistan which would be duly reflected, as appropriate, in any third report.

9. He had also been able to visit several countries, at the invitation of both Governments and non-governmental organizations, in order to discuss the problems relating to his mandate and to observe at first hand the situation concerning religious rights and freedom. He was particularly grateful to the Government of Bulgaria which had invited him to visit that country in October 1988 in order to observe to what extent it had been complying with the provisions of the Declaration in general and, more specifically, with respect to the members of the Muslim community in Bulgaria. He also thanked the Holy See, some eminent representatives of which he had met at the Vatican in July 1987; the various Irish non-governmental organizations which had invited
him to Dublin in December 1987; and the Istanbul Bar which had invited him, in his personal capacity, to attend a Seminar on the subject of the Turkish ethnic minority in Bulgaria.

10. In his second report, he had attempted to place the emphasis on manifestations of intolerance resulting more specifically from governmental actions or measures. Chapter III, section A represented an updating of the list of infringements of the various relevant provisions of the Declaration, based on information received since the submission of the initial report. He had continued to receive allegations from various sources concerning infringements of the right to have, to manifest, and to practice the religion or belief of one's choice; the right not to be subjected to discriminatory treatment on the grounds of religion or belief; and the right to bring up children in accordance with the religion or belief chosen by the parents.

11. Those various infringements of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion had serious repercussions on the other fundamental rights and freedoms. Chapter III, section B, mentioned situations which revealed the physical and moral repercussions of restrictions on freedom of movement and restrictions on the freedom of expression. While the overall situation remained disturbing, it was only fair to add that certain individual cases, cited in the report, indicated an improvement and gave grounds for guarded optimism. A certain opening out had recently been noted in several countries and that had also been reflected in the area of religious freedom.

12. Chapter IV attempted to assess future prospects for the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief. The international system already had a number of mandatory norms in the area of freedom of religion or belief but, in view of the persistence of the problem of religious and ideological intolerance, it seemed that the adoption of a convention would make it possible to expand the scope of religious rights and freedoms in their practical manifestations and would impose on the States parties a number of requirements which might encourage greater respect for religious rights and freedoms by such States.

13. Lastly, it must be concluded that, during the period covered by the report, there had been a persistence of infringements of freedom of religion or belief, committed in various forms and in practically all regions of the world. The threat of religious intolerance to the integrity and dignity of the individual made it all the more necessary for the international community to take concerted action with a view to implementing measures to guarantee effective observance of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. It would be desirable therefore to establish, within the Commission, a working group responsible for considering a draft convention on freedom of religion and belief. At the national level, States should endeavour to adapt their legislation to existing international norms and take effective measures to prevent and eliminate any discrimination based on religion or belief. To that end they should review their administrative practices, teach tolerance to the persons responsible for applying the laws and introduce educational programmes with the aim of fostering a spirit of tolerance and understanding among young people. States should also try to make use of bilateral negotiations to achieve peaceful settlements between countries divided by religious differences. In that regard, there was sometimes a legal vacuum which should be filled by bilateral agreements creating the conditions needed for the reunification of separated families or
for freedom of cross-frontier movement. Finally, it was extremely important that the non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights and religious communities should continue their activities aimed at promoting and encouraging tolerance.

14. Mr. DITCHEV (Bulgaria) said that the elimination of intolerance based on religion or belief was the concern not only of philosophers and leaders but also of individuals who aspired to justice for all. There could be no doubt, however, that the achievement of that noble aim had been and would continue to be difficult. That point was particularly important because it helped to encourage more tolerance in a discussion concerned precisely with the need for tolerance. History and the development of religions or beliefs showed that religious differences had often been used for political purposes and that the resulting intolerance had led to fratricidal wars. Although some countries had more or less overcome that state of affairs, others still faced difficulties of that nature. In order not to repeat past mistakes, consideration must be given to the historical circumstances and the different stages of evolution of countries before passing judgement or levelling allegations.

15. Tolerance did not, however, mean that no concern could be expressed. His delegation had thus had serious reservations as to the advisability of appointing a special rapporteur on issues connected with religion or belief; although it in no way questioned the integrity of the Special Rapporteur, the extension of whose mandate it had supported. Moreover, his Government had been the first to extend an official invitation to the Special Rapporteur.

16. His delegation fully supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 66 of the Special Rapporteur's report (E/CN.4/1988/45), namely, the proposal to elaborate an international convention on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief. As the Special Rapporteur recommended in paragraph 67, it would also be desirable, to establish, in accordance with the procedure followed in several similar cases during recent years, an informal open-ended working group responsible for considering the draft convention. Such an initiative would have more practical results in terms of achieving the goal of tolerance than any collection of information on particular countries, since everyone was well aware how easily such information could be manipulated. To avoid abuse of religious or other beliefs for political purposes, it was necessary to establish an international instrument which would bind States legally and not only morally; a conclusion that the Special Rapporteur had also reached. His delegation was also able to support the Special Rapporteur's other recommendations which were of a more short-term nature, on the understanding, however, that they would not contribute as much as an international convention to the long-term solution of the problems involved.

17. As for the section of the report relating to the Special Rapporteur's visit to Bulgaria, the Government had, in a spirit of co-operation, trust and understanding, sent a reply to the Special Rapporteur concerning some allegations designed to give a distorted picture of the situation in his country. He would refrain from commenting on the real purposes and forces behind those allegations and would confine himself to pointing out that they were mainly politically motivated. It would be naive and unrealistic to assert that the situation in Bulgaria was perfect, but distortions of reality based on ill-founded information must be avoided. That was why the Special
Rapporteur had been invited to visit Bulgaria in order to see for himself the actual situation concerning the tolerance vis-à-vis all religions or other beliefs.

18. To gain a complete picture of the situation, it should be realized firstly that most Bulgarians were atheists. Secondly, the predominant religion professed by the majority of believers in Bulgaria was the Eastern Orthodox religion headed by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. There were also some communities of the Armenian Apostolical Church, the Russian Orthodox and Romanian Orthodox Churches, as well as Catholics (of both Latin and Eastern Rites), Protestants, Muslims, Jews, etc. Since, unfortunately, the Special Rapporteur had not reproduced in his report the legislative provisions proclaiming freedom of religion in Bulgaria, which contributed decisively to the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, it was necessary to point out that no church or religion was banned in Bulgaria. Religion was separated from the State. The Bulgarian Constitution ensured equality for all citizens - both believers and non-believers - before the law; it forbade any privileges or restrictions based on religion or any acts inciting to hatred based on religious conviction or the political manipulation of religion; it prohibited the establishment of political organizations based on religion; and it guaranteed freedom of religious rights and anti-religious propaganda as well as freedom of association for religious purposes. All that clearly showed that the Bulgarian State had provided the legislative prerequisites to enable both believers and non-believers to participate in all spheres of socio-economic life. Freedom of conscience and religion, as well as the freedom to have no religion at all, were further elaborated in the relevant provisions of many of the legislative acts, in particular the Penal Code which contained a chapter entitled "Offence against denominations". Pursuant to article 164 of that Code the preaching of hatred based on religion was outlawed. Anyone who hindered others, by force or by threats, from freely practising their faith or performing their religious rites, providing that these persons were not breaching any national laws or public order, was punished by law.

19. His Government had been the first and, according to the report, the only one to invite the Special Rapporteur to pay an official visit to its country and to give him the opportunity to see for himself how the provisions of the Declaration were being applied to all religions and not just to one particular religion.

20. Although the Special Rapporteur was entitled to report on the visit as he saw fit, the Bulgarian delegation had a right to make some comments thereon. It appreciated the Special Rapporteur's efforts to take into account the historical development of the various religions practised in Bulgaria and their role during Ottoman rule. Such an approach was a fair and objective one. It noted with satisfaction that the account of the Special Rapporteur's visit contained no confirmation of the allegations levelled against Bulgaria. The Special Rapporteur, who had had the opportunity to talk to representatives of all the religious denominations in Bulgaria, had made a conscious effort to understand the facts of the situation and to reflect them in his report. He had visited the Chief Mufti and had been accompanied by him when visiting the Mosque in Sofia. He had visited the historic Rila and Batshkovo monasteries; the cities of Perushtitza and Batak; and Sofia Cathedral and the monumental church at Shipka, both built in memory of the hundreds of thousands of persons
who had sacrificed their lives that Bulgaria might be free. He had spoken to
Bulgarian Muslims and had visited mosques. He had also visited the mosque —
allegedly destroyed by the Bulgarian authorities — in the city of Kaskovo and
had met the Imam — alleged to have been murdered.

21. In general, his delegation agreed with the view expressed by the
Special Rapporteur in paragraph 34 of his report that the problem of the
Muslim community in Bulgaria was only one of the many aspects of a political
crisis in relations between Bulgaria and Turkey, but wished to add that it was
an artificially created problem of a purely political nature. It was
inadvisable, therefore, to exploit the issue for political purposes.

22. His Government had repeatedly stated its desire to maintain good
relations with all its neighbours, including Turkey, and to enter into
bilateral negotiations without pre-conditions. Moreover, it had already
invited the President, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of
Turkey to visit Bulgaria.

23. Although his delegation agreed with the Special Rapporteur that the best
way of settling problems with a neighbouring country was through negotiations,
it challenged the formulation of the Special Rapporteur's recommendation in
paragraph 35 for two reasons: firstly, because Bulgaria applied the principle
of the separation of Church and State and had no official religion and,
secondly, because the Bulgarian Constitution guaranteed the equality of all
Bulgarian citizens, believers and non-believers, before the law, and freedom
of religious practice was assured. Consequently, it was for the various
denominations and the State to settle any problems within the existing
legislation.

24. Lastly, his delegation was surprised at the inordinate proportion of the
report taken up by consideration of the situation in Bulgaria, which could
surely not be sufficiently explained by the fact that Bulgaria had been the
only country visited by the Special Rapporteur. His delegation reiterated its
readiness to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Declaration on
the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on
Religion or Belief and to continue its constructive dialogue with the Special
Rapporteur.

25. The Most Reverend Mgr. KIRILL (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said
the fact that an official representative of the Russian Orthodox Church was
for the first time addressing the Commission as a member of the Soviet
delegation was striking evidence of the important changes currently taking
place in the Soviet Union.

26. The millions of Christians whom he represented would in 1988 be
celebrating the one thousandth anniversary of Russia's conversion to
Christianity. The Church had always played an important role in Russian
society and had always been closely linked to the life of the people. It had
impacted Christian values and had contributed to the formation of the State,
the strengthening of personal, family and social moral values and the
evolution of art and literature; in addition, it had encouraged the people to
fight the invader and strengthened the sense of national identity.
27. As a result of the October Revolution, the Church had been deprived of its public status and privileges, although that had not altered its basic nature. In order to understand the complexities of relations between Church and State in the USSR, it was necessary to bear in mind that, whereas the Revolution had been made mostly by people belonging to the Church, the great majority of top-ranking religious dignitaries had opposed any change. The result had been discontent among the population, a substantial part of which had turned away from the Church, and a confrontation between Church and State. The population had formed the view that religion was not the best means of building a new society and, in a certain way, the events of the French Revolution had been repeated in Russia. At the same time, the Revolution had asserted the principle of freedom of conscience, which had formed the basis of the initial Soviet legislation on the Church and religion; however, the implementation of that legislation had run up against many obstacles with tragic consequences such as had occurred in the Stalinist period. It had taken much time and effort on both sides for the Church to stop being regarded as a counter-revolutionary force and for the principle of freedom of conscience to become an everyday reality. Currently, relations between Church and State were perfectly normal, and they were governed by new legislation. The Russian Orthodox Church now had 76 eparchies inside and 8 outside the USSR, coming under the Patriarchate of Moscow. The USSR had 7,000 Orthodox parishes, 19 large monasteries and 5 seminaries and theological academies. The Church published works in five languages and had a factory producing religious objects and icon-painting shops. Its resources came from voluntary donations and the proceeds from the sale of religious objects and literature; the revenues of parishes and monasteries were exempt from taxation.

28. Religious education was dispensed within the limits defined by the law, and the same was true of charity, to which the State allotted some 40 million roubles per year. The Church also financed the restoration of numerous monuments and all places of worship. It maintained ties with other Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church and a large number of Protestant Churches; it took part in the activities of the World Council of Churches and in those of a number of other international religious organizations; lastly, it was involved in numerous peace initiatives.

29. Preparations were under way for the celebration of the one thousandth anniversary of the baptism of Russia. The Local Council of the Russian Church, which was to co-ordinate all activities marking the occasion, was to elaborate a new Order for the Church, which should result in a programme of consolidation of religious life and the canonization of new saints. Three international scientific conferences had already been held with the participation of theologians and secular scholars from the USSR and many other countries. Also in connection with the commemoration of the one thousandth anniversary, it was planned to publish numerous works, in particular a new edition of the Bible, and to produce records of sacred music, slides and other souvenirs. The Russian Orthodox Church saw the anniversary as important not only for the USSR but also for the history and destiny of other countries, and it therefore expected broad participation by religious and lay figures from all over the world.

30. It would be noted that the one thousandth anniversary coincided with a period of profound social change in the USSR. "Glasnost" and democratization applied to all areas of social life, including religious life. That was
demonstrated not only by the public discussion on the improvement of relations between Church and State, but also by the increased participation of the Church in social life, greater use by the Church of the mass media, and the enhancement of Church institutions. New religious buildings had been constructed, the Government had handed over three historic monasteries to the Church, and many places of worship had been built. It was quite obvious that there was an increasing realization of the importance of participation by the Church in analysing a number of social problems and of the need to intensify relations between believers and non-believers; the result could only be the elimination of all ideological prejudices and greater respect for the law.

31. While paying a tribute to the quality of the Special Rapporteur's report (E/CN.4/1988/45), he wondered whether issues as complicated as the relationship between human rights and religious freedoms could not more fruitfully be studied in a collective context than by a single individual, however qualified he might be. In that connection, he supported the idea of requesting an informal working group to consider a draft convention, taking account of the experience acquired in elaborating other international instruments.

32. His delegation, which was convinced that all the problems dividing the international community were in one way or another linked to the single problem of mankind's survival, believed that an understanding of that interdependence should enable differences to be overcome and peace, justice and respect for life to triumph.

33. Mr. BROGLIO (Italy), after recalling the many instruments of the United Nations, the Commission of the European Communities, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which provided for the right to religious freedom, emphasized that infringements of the freedom of religion of individuals and groups were increasingly numerous; whereas the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion was forcefully proclaimed, the legal rules underpinning it were not always fully applied.

34. The Commission was meeting at a particularly grave moment of the world's history when a resurgence of dangerous antagonisms and tensions made substantial segments of world public opinion inclined to view religious persecution as inevitable. However, in a world subject to conflicting economic, political and ideological interests, all defenders of intellectual works must resist the evident passivity and denounce the idea of the inevitability of mass and flagrant violations of the rights of believers and religious minorities as a dangerous failure of human intelligence and dignity. The Commission must arouse the conscience on which the struggle for genuine peace and freedom primarily depended.

35. Since the Special Rapporteur's report (E/CN.4/1988/45) showed that infringements of the various elements of the right to religious freedom, which were set forth in a number of instruments, had not diminished since the publication of the first report (E/CN.4/1987/35), the time had come to give further consideration to the formulation and adoption of an international instrument specifically concerned with the elimination of manifestations of intolerance, embodying the principles established in the various United Nations
conventions and declarations and based on the 1981 Declaration. In view of the complexity of the issue and the time needed to establish a working group, the Special Rapporteur's mandate should be extended.

36. Freedom of religion or belief should not be reduced to mere tolerance of persons who were attached to old values, which should be preserved as traditions. Moreover, problems of freedom of religion were not dealt with in a sufficiently positive manner in relations between Church and State. Those problems were vast, since they involved the nature and character of values which were also cultural identities. On that subject, it was regrettable that the Special Rapporteur of the Commission and the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission had omitted to mention UNESCO's activities for the protection of cultural identity, and in particular its Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, in which beliefs were regarded as an element of culture which, as such, should benefit from all the protection accorded to cultural values and traditions. In that Declaration UNESCO recognized that the cultural heritage included rites and beliefs. That important expression of the international conscience also warranted a place among the Commission's documents.

37. One essential aspect of the exercise of the right to freedom of religion was conscientious objection to military service. If "conscience" meant genuine moral convictions based on religion or humanism, that question could not be overlooked in an analysis of government measures and acts incompatible with the two International Covenants on Human Rights and the 1981 Declaration. If everyone was to be guaranteed the enjoyment of his human rights in the religious sphere, analysis — and hence United Nations action — should not be limited to the principles of the 1981 Declaration, the importance and application of which remained strictly related to the existing binding rules of international law. Therefore, the question of the protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief in armed conflicts should have been dealt with in the study of Mrs. Odio Benito (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/26) and in the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission. The international community already had a wide range of binding rules which could provide an intellectual and practical basis for guaranteeing the protection of the freedom of religion or belief of civilians, prisoners and combatants against the foreseeable effects of an armed conflict as well as the protection of religious monuments and sites forming part of the spiritual heritage of peoples. In particular, the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols thereto, the Hague conventions of 1899 and 1907 for the pacific settlement of international disputes and the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict contained provisions designed to safeguard all cultural property, including religious monuments, and to ensure the immunity of property placed under special protection in time of war. For example, the territory of the Vatican City had a special status which could easily be granted to other religious centres to protect them from serious war damage and guarantee access to places of worship, respect for religious beliefs and practices and lay Church workers and attendance of church services.

38. His delegation had already addressed the Commission and the General Assembly on the global reform process instituted in Italy to bring up to date the legislation on religious freedom and relations between the State and religious denominations. Mrs. Odio Benito had failed to take account of those explanations in her report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/26), which contained some comments devoid of any legal foundation. In paragraph 62, for instance, there
was a reference to an Italian law providing for obligatory religious instruction in kindergartens, and in paragraph 109 (c) mention was made of coercion to receive religious education in a religion not one's own. However, that was purely optional education governed by the 1984 agreement and the 1985 understanding between the Ministry of National Education and the Italian Episcopal Conference. In that connection, it should also be noted that a law of 18 June 1986 provided that schoolchildren over the age of 14 were free to decide for themselves whether or not to take advantage of optional religious education.

39. Referring to paragraphs 83 and 88 of the report, he questioned the classification adopted by the Special Rapporteur to group States on the basis of the system governing their relationships with religions. For instance, only 3 countries were mentioned as having concluded agreements with the Catholic Church, when there were in fact at least 30. Moreover, it was strange that countries which had signed a concordat with the Holy See should be classified among those which practised the separation of Church from State. In Italy, on the other hand, the signature between 1984 and 1987 of agreements between the Italian State and the Vaudois and Methodist Churches, the Union of Christian Seventh Day Adventist Churches, the Union of Pentecostal Churches and the Union of Italian Jewish Communities was a very significant development, and not only for the history of religious freedom in the country. By concluding those agreements, Italy had undertaken to implement the basic principles of the Constitution of the Republic, which proclaimed the social and legal equality of all citizens, without distinction as to religious faith or belief, and equal religious freedom for all groups, churches and denominations.

40. The 1984 Concordat reform and the new system based on the previously mentioned 1984, 1986 and 1987 agreements, which were consistent with the principles of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, constituted an organic restructuring of a vitally important sector forming part of the legal organization of the Italian State. Thanks to that fully justified restructuring, the legislation of the Italian Republic was now based on entirely revised principles and on new regulations safeguarding the specific identity of Churches, denominations and religious groups.

41. If the cause of peace was to take hold in the minds of men and the conscience of nations, it was necessary - and in the general interest - to recognize the dignity of the human person and the inviolability of the conscience. States therefore had a duty to respect those principles and to guarantee everyone protection against discrimination based on language, race or religion. Persons belonging to different spiritual families ought to recognize one another's rights as members of the community of peoples.

42. Mr. TROUVEROY (Belgium) emphasized that the question of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief occupied an increasingly important place in the Commission's work, as indicated by the copious documentation submitted to the current session. Among the documents before the Commission, particular mention should be made of the study by Mrs. Odio Benito, Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1987/26), and the report by Mr. d'Almeida Ribeiro (E/CN.4/1988/45), Special Rapporteur appointed in accordance with Commission resolution 1986/20, of which Belgium had been a sponsor.
43. In his initial report, Mr. Ribeiro had been outstandingly successful in defining the basic structures of his analysis. In addition, he had rightly considered that it was preferable not to name countries against which allegations had been made without first giving them the opportunity to provide clarifications. The current report marked a new phase in that the Special Rapporteur had deemed it necessary to address more specific requests for information to certain Governments, which were listed in paragraph 15 of the document. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the replies and co-operation furnished to the Special Rapporteur by the Governments of Bulgaria, Burundi, Pakistan, Turkey and the Soviet Union and urged the Governments of Albania and the Islamic Republic of Iran to follow their example. His delegation was convinced that it was in the interests not only of the Commission's work but also of the parties concerned that co-operation should be established between Governments, on the one hand, and the Commission and its machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights, on the other. While gratified to note that that aim had been achieved in the case of a number of situations, his delegation had reservations about allegations of intolerance reproduced somewhat prematurely without the cases being substantiated and without any real dialogue with the Governments concerned (paras. 40 et.seq. of the report). Without wishing to take a position on the validity of such allegations, his delegation merely wished to draw the Special Rapporteur's attention to a question of method which might cause problems and create ambiguity.

44. With regard to the reply of the Bulgarian Government to the Special Rapporteur, his delegation greatly appreciated that Government's invitation to Mr. Ribeiro to visit Bulgaria. His delegation was encouraged by the reply and by the Bulgarian Government's statement concerning the existence of genuine guarantees for the protection of religious freedom and the situation of Bulgarian Muslims, and suggested that the Commission should keep the matter under review.

45. With regard to allegations of religious intolerance in Turkey, his delegation was gratified by the Turkish Government's statement that religious minorities in Turkey fully enjoyed equal rights with all other citizens and could practise their religion without hindrance.

46. With regard to the reply of the Soviet Government, his delegation had taken due note of the various guarantees granted to citizens in the religious field. However, it would like, as soon as possible, to have additional information concerning the application of the restriction on freedom of conscience referred to in article 39 of the Soviet Constitution (E/CN.4/1988/45, p. 14, para. 19). It feared that too broad an interpretation of that restriction might, in some cases, impede the exercise of the freedom of religion or belief. It hoped, however, that the new thinking developing in the USSR would help to strengthen the guarantees needed for the unimpeded exercise of the freedom of religion or belief.

47. His delegation thanked the Pakistan delegation for the information provided by its Government on the situation of the Ahmadiyya community and noted with appreciation the statement by the Pakistan Government that freedom of religion and belief was guaranteed in Pakistan. Recalling that, up until September 1987, the situation regarding religious freedom in Burundi had been a source of great concern for Belgium, it welcomed the statement by the new
Government of Burundi that freedom of worship would be guaranteed and urged it to take the necessary measures to restore the full exercise of freedom of religion and belief in the country.

48. Referring to the Special Rapporteur's conclusion concerning the possible formulation of an international convention on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief, his delegation felt that that would be a lengthy and costly task which it would not be desirable to undertake at the present stage. It considered that the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and many articles in existing international instruments already provided sufficient guarantees. His delegation could, however, go along with the approach suggested by the Sub-Commission, which advocated the collection of supplementary information enabling the elements which should be taken into consideration in a convention to be defined more precisely. Given the persistence of manifestations of intolerance or discrimination in the matter of religion or belief throughout the world - and in all systems - his delegation also favoured extending the Special Rapporteur's mandate.

49. Mr. RUBIO (Peru) said that history contained many examples of tragic events brought about by religious intolerance. Wars, captivity and persecution were the heavy tribute that peoples, communities and individuals had been forced to pay for having defended their convictions and beliefs or simply their cultural identity. Several centuries had passed before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and particularly articles 2 and 18 thereof, had established the principle of freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Those articles also constituted the basis of the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted in 1966, articles 18, 19, 26 and 27 of which provided, inter alia, that everyone had the right to freedom of opinion and religion, the right to practise a religion and the right to protection against any discrimination based on religion. It was only in 1981, however, that a significant step in the campaign against religious intolerance had been taken when the General Assembly adopted its resolution 36/55, entitled "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief". The text of that Declaration was largely the outcome of the tireless efforts of Mr. Abdoulaye Dieye, of Senegal, to whom the Peruvian delegation paid tribute.

50. Although, from a strictly legal point of view, that Declaration, like all other solemn declarations of the United Nations, created no rights or obligations, it constituted a yardstick by which Governments could measure their actions, since it contained the principles and values that should govern the conduct of individuals and States. However, there was no doubt that the provisions of the Declaration were frequently disregarded and that discrimination based on religion or belief was still widespread throughout the world.

51. Analysis of that phenomenon necessitated consideration of its full complexity. In fact, the origins of intolerance could be attributed to cultural and historical as well as political and economic factors. For example, it was undeniable that the extensive migrations and the transformation of societies with age-old traditions into more modern societies had given rise to cultural tensions that could easily degenerate into cultural or even
religious discrimination. It was also undeniable that lack of education, a poor understanding of different situations and sheer ignorance were the best allies of discrimination, which could take various forms: repression of religious practices, violation of places of worship, prohibition of the distribution of religious or other publications, a ban on the selection or training of religious dignitaries or on the celebration of religious festivals or, worse still, denial of the simple right to have a religion or other belief.

52. Tolerance, which had been defined as the free and peaceful coexistence of individuals or communities that recognized and accepted their profound differences of belief and customs, depended not only on individuals, but also and indeed principally on the actions and the commitment of States. It was the responsibility of the latter to promote peaceful coexistence among their citizens or among the members of the various nations, to implement international instruments and to eliminate all forms of religious intolerance. Consequently, regardless of the number of measures adopted, no real progress would be made until the States manifested the political will to combat intolerance.

53. On reading the report of the Special Rapporteur, his delegation, while deploiring the number of violations of freedom of religion or belief that were revealed therein, was encouraged by the evidently co-operative attitude of some Governments, particularly that of Bulgaria. He urged the Governments of other countries to follow suit.

54. His delegation also held the view that, although binding international instruments which guaranteed the right to freedom of religion already existed, the time had come to speed up the work that was being done with a view to the promulgation of a binding international convention on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief.

55. The drafting of a convention was a lengthy process, of course, and the work-load of the Commission and the other United Nations organs would continue to be a heavy one in other respects. All of them must take steps to promote the implementation of the Declaration, to have its text distributed in as many languages as possible, and to organize seminars on the matter. His delegation also considered it essential to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur so as to enable him to monitor the application of the recommendations and conclusions contained in his report.

56. With regard to the efforts being made to promote the application of the principles of the Declaration, he paid tribute to the work of such non-governmental organizations as Pax Christi, the World Council of Churches, the Four Directions Council, Amnesty International, Pax Romana, the Council on Religion and International Affairs, the Baha'ı International Community and the International Commission of Jurists, and urged them to continue their work.

57. As for religious tolerance in his own country, he pointed out that the Peruvian Constitution, while affirming the independence and autonomy of the State vis-à-vis the Church (art. 86), recognized the important role of the Catholic Church in the country's historical, cultural and moral development. That was inevitable in view of the influence of the Church, particularly through its action in favour of the indigenous population, on the formation of the Peruvian national identity, which was characterized by the intermixture of the indigenous and Spanish races and cultures. Those characteristics were
expressed in art, architecture and the law, in which the influence of the Church could also be found. Moreover, the Peruvian Constitution fully protected and guaranteed freedom of religious belief and practice. Various religious communities - Muslim, Jewish, Orthodox, Protestant, Baha'i, etc. - coexisted in perfect harmony. The Peruvian people not only respected all religions and beliefs; it also felt that they could make a significant contribution to its cultural enrichment.

STATEMENT BY MR. KLIBI, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

58. Mr. KLIBI (Secretary-General of the League of Arab States), having paid tribute to the Commission's efforts to defend human rights throughout the world, particularly in Namibia, Palestine and South Africa where forms of colonialism, territorial occupation and racial segregation persisted, said that the member countries of the League of Arab States, which were fully sympathetic to that cause, supported the efforts being made by the Commission to ensure respect for human rights and to make the various regimes aware of the need to establish a new international order under which respect for the identity of every people and for human rights would be guaranteed, in conformity with the Charter.

59. He also paid tribute to the endeavours of the Chairman of the Commission at its current session, who had personally helped to draft the African human rights charter, and to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, whose proven dedication had done much to further the cause of those rights. The Chairman's country - Senegal - had been a vigilant observer of events in Palestine which, with South Africa and Namibia, was one of the last few territories in which human rights were being gravely assailed. In fact, for several years, together with Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia, Senegal had, on behalf of the international community, been closely monitoring the situation in the territories occupied by Israel. Tribute should also be paid to the remarkable work that had been accomplished year after year by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in spite of systematic obstruction by the occupying Power. By its very existence, the Committee was a source of hope for the Palestinian people which, like the Namibian people, was still under the sway of a colonial régime based on racial discrimination and oppression. What was currently happening in Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights was a repetition of the events that had occurred at Sharpeville and Soweto and that were occurring daily at other places in South Africa. The events in the occupied Arab territories clearly showed that the investigations carried out at the individual, regional and international levels and the recommendations to which they had led had not made it possible to put an end to the violations of human rights resulting from the Israeli occupation, and the situation had worsened in recent weeks.

60. Under international law, any military occupation was, by definition, provisional and required the occupying authorities to ensure that the populations concerned were able to preserve their institutions with an eye to the society in which they would be living after the occupation. However, for more than 20 years, the Israeli occupation forces had been disregarding those obligations and defying the principles of international law. Countless examples, drawn from Israeli sources, could be quoted to illustrate the daily violations that Israel was committing in the occupied territories: the destruction of 25,000 homes since 1967, the expulsion of thousands of Palestinian patriots, the confiscation of more than half the land for the
establishment of colonial settlers, the seizure of water resources and the discriminatory treatment of Arab manpower, as attested in ILO reports. There was no need to recall the forms of repression that the Palestinians had been suffering since the beginning of December 1987 and which the media had reported throughout the world.

61. The international community must put an end to those practices, which frequently led Israel to profane places of worship and to infringe international rules and ethics. The fact that Israel justified those violations by invoking the need to defend the values of its democratic society and the interests of the free world in the region could not but render more serious its liability.

62. That grave situation constituted not only a permanent aggression against the population of the occupied Arab territories but also a challenge to the entire human race inasmuch as it rejected the highest values and principles and international provisions concerning human rights, which it was the Commission's task to defend. It was those fundamental principles that provided the basis for the condemnation of the barbarous acts that had shocked the conscience of mankind during the Second World War and of which many Jews had been the victims.

63. As the twentieth century drew to its close, it was impossible to condone the violation of those same principles in the occupied Arab territories. The international community could not tolerate the pursuit of a colonial policy implicitly based on a distinction between "civilized", "pseudo-civilized" and "non-civilized" peoples. It was unacceptable that any people should manipulate human rights to its material advantage at the expense of other peoples. The defence of those rights and of their universality had become a collective responsibility as defined in Article 56 of the Charter, which required action in keeping with respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Such a collective responsibility meant that States, peoples and organizations were duty-bound to take joint action to protect human rights and promote the principles on which the honour and the very raison d'être of mankind depended.

64. The Israeli and Pretoria régimes were the only ones that still resorted to expulsion from the territory they controlled of nationals subject to their authority and, in that respect, it was Israel that bore the heavier responsibility. It was not by chance that, a few weeks previously, the Security Council had reminded Tel Aviv that such practices were inadmissible and called upon it to rescind its expulsion orders.

65. That question was of particular importance in that one of the major achievements of mankind was that, regardless of the circumstances, a human being had the inalienable and imprescriptible right to live and die on his native soil. It was that most fundamental right that Israel was assailing whenever it forcibly expelled a Palestinian from his country or forced him to leave by destroying his home and confiscating his land. By such acts, Israel was attacking not only the rights of the Palestinian victim and the national rights of all Palestinians but also every human being, since it was undermining a fundamental conquest of mankind and of the international community. Consequently, opposition to Israel in that connection signified a
desire to defend not only the Palestinians but also the international community, which was being directly threatened in one of its most fundamental achievements.

66. As the vigilant guardian of respect for human rights, the Commission had a special responsibility with regard to what was happening in the occupied Arab territories. The mass uprising had revealed the fallacy not only of Israeli assertions that there was no such thing as a Palestinian people problem but also of the idea, promulgated by Tel Aviv in the Western countries, that the vast majority of Palestinians accepted that their destiny should be linked to the Jewish State. It was those same Palestinians who, since December 1987, had been expressing their rejection of the occupation by stonethrowing. The Israeli Prime Minister had affirmed that Israel would make no concession under what he called the pressure of violence. However, the whole world knew that the uprising had broken out only as a result of the intransigent manner in which successive Israeli Cabinets had responded to all the proposals for a settlement taking into account the aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Israeli authorities must know that the uprising in the occupied territories had changed the basic elements of the Palestinian problem and that every day that passed helped to create a situation that would ultimately force Israel to accept a settlement in conformity with international law. That - truly popular - uprising was animated by the will of a people to recover its identity, its freedom and its independence.

67. The credibility of the United Nations in general and of the Commission, in particular was currently being put to the test and a simple denunciation of activities contrary to human rights was insufficient. The Palestinian masses expected the international community to take practical steps and to devise appropriate solutions to that tragic problem, which had lasted for four decades. A resolution condemning Israeli practices was certainly needed, since it expressed a commitment to the protection of human rights, but it would assume its full significance only if it reflected an international resolve to address the issue in a radical and lasting manner. The "war of the stones" in the occupied territories had produced a profound change in attitudes both inside and outside those territories. Everyone, and particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, had an obligation to seize that historic opportunity to deal with the problem, taking into account the interests of all the parties concerned and, in particular, those of the Palestinian people.

68. The Arab States had, on several occasions, expressed their readiness to contribute to a global settlement and, to that end, had proposed the Arab Peace Plan, adopted at Fez in 1982, the main aim of which was to highlight the fundamental principles that would ensure the establishment of lasting security and comprehensive peace in the region. In the view of the Arab States, those principles which were derived from the Charter, United Nations resolutions and international law constituted the best way of achieving a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Fez Plan assigned a special role to the Security Council as the United Nations organ responsible for the preservation of international peace and security. It was highly significant that the second Arab resolution, adopted at the Amman Summit in November 1987, endorsed the concept of an international peace conference on the Middle East, which had been supported by the General Assembly
of the United Nations since 1983. In that resolution, the Arab States affirmed their commitment to work for the holding of such a Conference with the active participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the effective presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. For the Arab States, that was the way to achieve a peaceful, global and lasting settlement of the conflict, one which would enable the peoples of the region to devote their energies to development, progress and the promotion of human welfare, of man's intellectual and spiritual potential and of coexistence among peoples as the sine qua non for peace and security among all nations.

69. The CHAIRMAN said he was convinced that that careful review of past and current events in the occupied Arab territories, as well as the prospect of peace that had been outlined, would leave a deep impression not only upon the members of the Commission but throughout the world, where developments in the Middle East were giving rise to concern.

QUESTION OF THE REALIZATION IN ALL COUNTRIES OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS CONTAINED IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, AND STUDY OF SPECIAL PROBLEMS WHICH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FACE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THESE HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING:

(a) PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE RIGHT TO ENJOY AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING; THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT;

(b) THE EFFECTS OF THE EXISTING UNJUST INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER ON THE ECONOMIES OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AND THE OBSTACLE THAT THIS REPRESENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS;

(c) POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT AND IN THE FULL REALIZATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS

STATUS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS (agenda item 18) (continued)

70. Mr. HEREDIA PEREZ (Observer for Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, in the statement he had made at the morning meeting, Mr. Eggar, the United Kingdom Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, had referred to Cuba using the words: "Let us not forget ... the repressive policies of the authorities in Cuba". His delegation thought that that speaker had not had an opportunity to visit Cuba, unlike Mr. Richard Balfe, a British member of the European Parliament, member of the Sub-Committee on Foreign Affairs and Human Rights and spokesman of the Labour Party on those matters, who, during his tour of the country a few days previously, had visited various institutions and had been able to see for himself the true situation in Cuba. Of the many comments made by that visitor on the social aspects of life in Cuba, he wished to mention those concerning the conditions in Cuban prisons which, according to Mr. Richard Balfe, compared favourably with those in United Kingdom prisons. Moreover, that was not the only testimony of that type, since Mrs. Mary Banotti, an Irish Parliamentarian, who had also visited Cuba, had been able to give the lie to
numerosus allegations made by anti-Cuban propaganda. The impressions and comments of Mr. Balfe and Mrs. Banotti were available to any members of the Commission who might wish to consult them.

71. In connection with the words he had quoted from the statement of the Under-Secretary of State, the Commission should not forget either some notorious facts concerning the situation in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland such as, for example, the recent declaration by Patrick Mayhew, the Attorney-General of the United Kingdom, to the effect that the officials implicated in the murder in 1982 of several persons in Northern Ireland would not, after all, be prosecuted. Similar facts and events had also been reported in the press; a few days previously, a London court had rejected the appeal lodged by five Irish persons accused of having caused a bomb explosion in Birmingham, who had been sentenced to hard labour for life. The press and television had also reported questionable procedures in some trials, such as the fact that statements by parents and relatives had been obtained under pressure from the police, who had not denied the fact. Those were problems that were being discussed publicly on the television screens of the United Kingdom, as he himself had seen.

72. Mr. LINDGREN ALVES (Brazil), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement by the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples had painted a dismal picture of the situation of rural workers in Brazil. Although the seriousness of the situation of such workers in some areas was undeniable, it was astonishing, to say the least, that a situation arising from well-known economic problems should have been dealt with in the Commission on Human Rights in a tone of accusation. It was all too true that the workers on the latifundia earned less than $50 per month, but so did urban workers, a sad reality that was due to the imbalances from which the Brazilian economy as a whole was suffering. In its statement on the right to development, his delegation had explained that one of the main problems handicapping underdeveloped societies was precisely the fragility of their institutions, and that was the reason why his Government attached so much importance to the implementation of that inalienable right.

73. The violent incidents that had occurred in some parts of Brazil had been widely discussed within the country by the representatives of all the sectors concerned. Steps had been taken to deal with the problem, which was affecting the rural areas. The Council for the Protection of Human Rights, an organ subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, was paying special attention to that situation. Furthermore, Brazilians in general were eager to rectify irregularities and remedy abusive practices occurring in their country. It was to be hoped that the Government, in collaboration with all the other sectors of society, would find solutions to all those problems, that it was by no means seeking to deny.

74. Mr. GLAIEL (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the remarks made that morning by the United Kingdom Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs were so grave that his own delegation could not remain silent. They were, in fact, part of a campaign designed to divert attention from events that had stirred the conscience of the world, namely the uprising of the Palestinian people and of the population of the occupied territories. Everyone knew that the prime responsibility for the situation in the Middle East lay with Great Britain, which had sown the seeds of that tragedy through its disastrous
"Balfour Declaration" and had subsequently persisted in its tilt towards Israel, just as it displayed a similar tilt towards the Pretoria régime. Instead of condemning the occupation of territories by Israel and Pretoria's policy of apartheid, the United Kingdom representative had preferred to talk about the Soviet Jews and assail the policies of Syria, Cuba and other sovereign States, of which his Government did not approve. He had done so to humour pressure groups that were active in his country, to the detriment of right, justice and truth. The United Kingdom delegation would do better to speak of the fate of aliens in its country and in other Western States.

75. Mr. STEEL (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), replying to the delegations of Cuba and Syria, said that he refused to engage in polemics, which might cause the Commission to lose sight of the point of the comment made by his country's Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, namely the need for it to avoid selectivity in its consideration of situations in which violations of human rights might be feared. As for the importance attached by the Cuban delegation to the publicity given by the United Kingdom press and television to the events it had noted, he hoped that the delegation in question had fully realized the opportunities that existed in the United Kingdom freely to criticize government actions or any abusive practice. A system in which such freedom of expression was not only proclaimed but also exercised would appear to have little to reproach itself for with regard to respect for human rights. When the time came to consider the situation in Cuba, he would be both happy and surprised if the delegation of Cuba could prove that such freedom of expression also existed in its country.

76. As for the trial of the "Birmingham Six", he was unable to deal with the substance of the case, since there would undoubtedly be an appeal to a higher court. However, there again, he hoped that the Cuban delegation would be able to prove that criminal trials in Cuba took place with the same publicity and giving the accused the same rights as in the United Kingdom.

77. With regard to the Syrian delegation's remarks concerning the United Kingdom's position on the question of the territories occupied by Israel and the situation in South Africa, he invited the Syrian delegation to reread the statements made by the United Kingdom delegation during the consideration of those questions. As for the real reason behind the Syrian delegation's statement, namely the Under-Secretary of State's opinion that the human rights situation in Syria merited consideration just like that prevailing in other countries, he thought that the facts spoke for themselves.

78. Mrs. RODRIGUEZ (Observer for Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that her delegation had always endeavoured to provide all the information required by well-disposed persons who examined the situation in Cuba without any prejudices concerning it. Her delegation had referred to some facts relating to the United Kingdom simply because that country seemed to be posing as the supreme judge entitled to give lessons to all and sundry. It should not be forgotten that the United Kingdom had some domestic problems of its own to resolve in the field of human rights details of which her delegation was ready to provide at the appropriate moment.
79. Mr. GLAIEL (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the United Kingdom delegation had confirmed in its reply that its Government had launched a relentless anti-Syrian campaign. For its part, his delegation would not be satisfied until an investigation had been undertaken into the situation of immigrants and refugees in the United Kingdom, the fate of the Irish prisoners and the interference of Great Britain in Ireland.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.